

EXHIBIT

16

DATE

1/29/15

HB

268

# Montana Sportsmen ALLIANCE

Voice of Reason on Montana Fish and Wildlife Issues

**Basic content module**

Far far away, behind the word  
mountains.

**Far from the countries**

Vokalia and Consonantia, there  
live the blind texts.

Rep. Kelly Flynn has a potential bill draft that would create a "Block Management Stamp". The specifics have not yet been finalized but initially he is thinking that it would be an opt out program so that those not wishing to hunt on Block Management Areas (BMA's) would not be charged any fee. Those wishing to hunt on BMA's would be required to purchase the stamp. The cost of the stamp has yet to be determined but Rep. Flynn is thinking \$25 per person. He is also trying to find out how best to handle youths, would it be free for them or 50% of adults or ? This stamp would be required of both residents and non-residents hunting on BMA's.

All monies raised would go into the Habitat Enhancement account.

Rep. Flynn has asked us to seek comments/thoughts on this potential bill. Please respond to these specific questions:

1. Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp?
2. Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest?
3. What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age?
4. Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? If not, where would you like to see it go?

It is a very good thing when a legislator asks our opinion prior to the bill draft being finalized. This is an important topic and your replies are important! Please feel free to share this with others.

HB 268  
Quatrovario  
15  
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STANDARD  
STANDARD

I support this proposal. I would ensure all monies from this stamp go to the block management or toward the purchasing of permanent easements allowing public hunting.

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1. Yes, I support the proposed "Block Management Stamp".
  2. \$25 is an acceptable fee for me.
  3. Youth, 12 to 17 years of age should pay no fee, as we should encourage them to hunt and they will later contribute.
  4. I do support the Habitat Enhancement Fund, but would like to see higher funding for Block Management in order to more adequately compensate landowners.
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#1-No I would not support a Block Mgt Stamp. Reason being is that in my experience Block Mgt land is incredibly over used and abused. Get a system in place that allows for good hunting opportunities on BMA land and put in place control over the abuse and then I'd look at it.

#2/3-If it were to happen (and being as a rancher is bringing it forward I suspect that it will) then I'd be in favor of a \$15 fee for the youth. And for the adults \$25. Would the fee be the same for residents and non residents?

#4-I'm not totally sure what the Hunter Enhancement funds are supposed to go to. But, it seems to me that they were part of the funds that were involved in purchasing the ranch on the Milk a couple of years ago which if that's the case then no I wouldn't be in support of the funds going there as that deal was handled incredibly poorly!

I could see the funds going back into creating a better system for Block Mgt where as an element of control, an eye towards not abusing the game populations as well the land and for creating quality opportunities. But, in order to do this I feel that the sportsman need a voice at the table when it was being set up. Block Mgt could be a wonderful thing if done remotely correctly (which it presently isn't...)

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I'm fine with that. \$25 would be fine, with 1/2 or free for the 12-17 year olds. Money going to Habitat fund or even to the ranchers allowing access would be appropriate.

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Rep. Kelly Flynn has a potential bill draft that would create a "Block Management Stamp". The specifics have not yet been finalized but initially he is thinking that it would be an opt out program so that those not wishing to hunt on Block Management Areas (BMA's) would not be charged any fee. Those wishing to hunt on BMA's would be required to purchase the stamp. The cost of the stamp has yet to be determined but Rep. Flynn is thinking \$25 per person. He is also trying to find out how best to handle youths, would it be free for them or 50% of adults or ? This stamp would be required of both residents and non-residents hunting on BMA's.

All monies raised would go into the Habitat Enhancement account.

Rep. Flynn has asked us to seek comments/thoughts on this potential bill. Please respond to these specific questions:

1. Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp? I would support the creation of a Block Management Stamp.
2. Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest? For me the answer is yes. However, I utilize Block Management significantly. For those who only utilize Block Management once or twice a year, this cost may be viewed as excessive.
3. What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age? I suggest, there be no cost to those 12-17. They must be accompanied by an adult and the adult if hunting Block Management would need to purchase a stamp.
4. Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? If not, where would you like to see it go? Yes, However, a portion could be used for access enhancement, such as signing federal and state lands.

It is a very good thing when a legislator asks our opinion prior to the bill draft being finalized. This is an important topic and your replies are important! Please feel free to share this with others.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR COMMENTS!!

Montana Sportsmen Alliance Leadership Group

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My answers ... 1) Yes I support it.

- 2) \$25.00 o.k. for an adult or head of household or \$30.00 for family.
- 3) No Cost or minimal, say \$5.00 for youth 12-17
- 4) Shouldn't the proceeds go to Block Management enhancement?

Otherwise habitat enhancement is o.k. with me.

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I'm all for it. \$25 dollars is a reasonable cost for the stamp, maybe 15 dollars for the youth. I don't think all the money should go to habitat enhancement, however. We in Eastern MT will see a very small portion of that, because of our lower population base and the whole preconceived notion that the Westerners seem to have about the unimportance of Eastern MT in general.

So I'd like to see at least a portion of the money (up to 50%) put back into Block Management itself, to assist in keeping it financially healthy.

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1. Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp? Yes
  2. Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest? Yes
  3. What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age? 1/2 and must be a one on one with adult-the problems we have had with youth and especially elk is a 18year old will gather up a bunch of youth and have slaughter party.
  4. Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? If not, where would you like to see it go? Don't know enough to comment.
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What's actually wrong with the current program? Is this a plan looking to solve a non-existent problem? Why wouldn't funds go to block management instead of Habitat Enhancement? Without knowing these answers I would be very hesitant to support something like this.

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1. Yes
  2. Yes
  3. Free
  4. Yes
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I'm happy Rep. Flynn is asking the opinion of Montana sportsman before drafting the final bill. My comments/questions are below:

**1) Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp?**

Yes, but I would need to know that the program would generate more revenue for the BMA program/Habitat Enhancement. I will not support a bill that is directly or indirectly undermines the funding of public access or habitat enchantment.

**2) Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest?**

Yes, I think \$25 is acceptable assuming it creates the appropriate revenue to improve

public access and/or habitat enchantment programs.

**3) What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age?**

We need more youth conservation-hunters and more funding for wildlife. I believe there should be license fees, etc. for youths of 12-17 years of age. For me, as a youth of even 18, buying a license imparted the responsibility of ethical of hunting and fishing and I knew I was supporting hunting and fishing in Montana with the license fees. I don't know the number but I think the costs should be a reduced "youth" fee.

**4) Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? If not, where would you like to see it go?**

Potentially. I don't know enough about the Habitat Enhancement Fund... I would support any program that directly impacts quality public habitat and access.

I do support the draft plan to implement a block management stamp proposed by Rep. Flynn. The price of \$25.00 for adults and \$12.00 for kids would be workable. All funded collected should go back into the program.

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I would support such a stamp. Youths should pay equal or at least half the adults ( their parents are probably paying their fee anyhow). I think \$25 is a bit too high, at least to begin with until we see how it does. I think opting out is the way to go – we might derive some revenue from folks who don't use BMA's who, knowing they have the stamp, might then choose to go to a BMA, or aren't even concerned about the extra fee.

We currently have a state lands access fee of \$10 and a Hunter Access Enhancement fee of \$2. What about simplifying and combine the new fee with the existing fee for \$25 and allocating the distribution so that state lands would still get an equivalent dollar amount that they do now, and same for HAEF. We have so many licenses and fees that it is very confusing, particularly for new hunters or non-resident hunters. Simplifying into one access fee seems like a reasonable approach.

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Sounds good to me. In general, the Block Management Program provides poor hunting. If hunters had to pay they would require better hunting – or not pay. Never could understand why it is OK to pay FWP's, but not directly to the landowner.

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The stamp is the way to go.. Kelly was talking about a ten dollar stamp with 5 stickers and it they were used --- you could purchaser and additional stamp --- this would be booking keeping night mess..... suggest a twenty five dollar stamp for resident and nonresident adults and \$ 10 stamp for those under 18.... money to be earmarked for management of the BMP and habitat management on lands owned by the FWP and/or DNRC...

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**Note: need to pay cooperator's more who have an approved WL management plan**

**for their land and are implanting that plan. FWP field biologist or BM coordinators would be responsible for determining how well the Management is bring implemented and recommend what additional payments would be made to the BM cooperator.**

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The block management stamp is an interesting proposal...I think it is a good idea, provided it expands acreage enrolled in the block mgmt. program. I haven't had time to think it through, so I'm shooting from the hip to a certain degree. Here are a few thoughts on the questions you raised.

I don't have any trouble with a \$25 stamp, but it might be a hard sell with the hunting public. It has taken us since 1991 to get the federal duck stamp raised from \$15 to \$25 (I don't think it's a done deal yet... the bill hasn't been signed, but I'm hopeful). Anyway, if \$25 doesn't fly, the legislature certainly could look at something less, maybe \$15. I wouldn't require youths to buy the stamp...it's hard enough to get them out hunting as it is. Then there are us old farts...not sure what to suggest there. I don't mind paying full price, but some seniors may not agree.

I do feel nonresidents should pay more for the stamp than residents--I'd suggest \$50. I hunt birds a lot in northeastern Montana, and the nonresident hunters roll in with trailers full of dogs and pound the BMAs pretty hard. I sometimes see one or two guys with a dozen or more bird dogs staked out next to their camper...some of them stay a couple of months which makes me wonder what they're doing with all the birds they shoot, but I guess that's a topic for law enforcement. A \$50 stamp wouldn't deter these guys...you should see the money they have tied up in dogs, hunting rigs, trailers, etc. Most of them are very well heeled and I think asking them to pay a bit more would ease some of the angst among resident hunters who have to compete with them for access.

Where the money should go and how it would be used is a matter of concern...I'd like to see at least most of it earmarked for the block management program. Habitat enhancement is fine but I'd like to know exactly how that would work. Right now conservation easements are funded through the Habitat Montana program, which comes out of license fees. I'm in favor of conservation easements but sadly they have on occasion been used for political favors...so I'd be more comfortable with block management stamp money being earmarked specifically for increased hunter access through the block management program.

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Love the idea of a BMA stamp. I have one thought of caution..... With the increase in license fees being requested this session, is the price tag of \$25 a little high? May legislators balk at asking for an increase in fees AND another "tax" being added too? May something like \$12-\$15 be more palatable and "saleable"? Just a thought.....

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Right now without all the info, maybe somewhere between \$10 & \$20 with the youth at 1/2 that price. paying is part of growing up

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I do NOT support separating BMA s from the general lisenche. Period. This opt out is for the cheap bastards who know there is little to no law enforcement in any area of MT. This is a ruse.

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Speaking only for myself, I have been suggesting some sort of BMA stamp for years.....the \$25 seems like a reasonable amount and I like the opt out feature. I suggest that all the funds go toward increasing or sustaining the BMA program with a 10-15% cap on BMA administration.

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1. Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp?
  - a. **NO** and especially **NOT** a book of stamps you use like postage stamps to paste on the sign up cards at BM sign in stations.
    2. Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest? **\$25 is not acceptable as I do not support additional fees for BM.**
    3. What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age? **Youths should get a "free" stamp for their licenses.**
    4. Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? **NO, HEF already has too much money which creates situations akin to the Milk River fiasco.**
  - b. If not, where would you like to see it go? **Why call it a BM Stamp when the money does not improve the quality of hunting on BMA's or more access to private lands?**

**My follow up feedback:**

1. In my view we have sufficient funding for Block Management and we don't need to throw any more "good" money after "bad."
2. We have a great deal more funding for access than Idaho or Wyoming, yet through efficiencies and priorities both states have better overall programs than we do.....albeit they are smaller programs.
3. The BM program does not "deserve" the extra funds until they are willing to do something significant to improve the program.

**Specifically:**

- The "access" program must get much more efficient in its use of current funding.
- The barren waste lands where landowners are getting paid the max for enrolling thousands of acres of bare or land devoid of game need to be culled from the program.
- Quality habitat and quality wildlife must be the most important goals of the program....with quality hunting experiences that follow.
- Efficiencies achieved through standardized, state-wide rules and protocols as well as



online applications/reservations must be implemented to avoid the waste associated with cumbersome, region-specific practices.

- Evaluation of the properties and the program must be moved from the current anecdotal write-ups to quantifiable data that can be useful in assessing the value of the overall program, program practices and individual properties.
- Access to state and federal lands must be moved to the top priority for BM contracts like Idaho does. Those properties which prohibit access to public lands should be dropped from the program.
- We must put a stop to the practice of Type II BMA landowners being paid to let their "friends and family" hunt first via "secret lists" ahead of the public hunters who believe that they actually have a chance to hunt a Type II property if they dial the phone for a couple hours a day to get a reservation to hunt .....But in reality, have the chance of a snowball in hell due to the "preferred friends and family" list practices employed now. How many people do you know who hunt Type II BMA's that get to hunt every year.....on BMA's with elk....and which have a lot of elk? These people are on the friends and families lists.....more often than not.

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Please pass my responses along and thank Representative Flynn for asking the opinion of Montana sportsmen and women.

1. Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp?  
Maybe, depending (see below).
2. Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest?  
Yes
3. What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age?  
None, but an adult holding a valid stamp must be present.
4. Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? If not, where would you like to see it go?  
NO. Although the Habitat Enhancement Fund is used to support many good projects and programs, if stamp holders are paying directly for access, then all the monies collected should only be used to enhance access to previously unavailable quality hunting opportunity. Further, the Department should not be allowed to "replace" or "offset" monies currently used for access programs coming from other sources with stamp money (that would be the same as raising their budget by 'taxing' sportsmen more without providing an equal amount of additional access).

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\$25.00 not to much, Youth at half price. Maybe call it a Habitat Enhancement Stamp, and designate the funds for improvement of those lands that are held and kept in Block Management only. Just a quick thought.

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I am in favor of it as long as it does not cut into any existing funding sources. Resident hunters don't have any skin in the game for block management - all they do is bitch and pass the costs on to someone else.

If they pay a little bit they have a real place at the bargaining table.

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One concern that it does raise is enforcement? I know the Montana FWP is already short staffed in many areas. This may add another issue for them to have to worry about. Something that may take away for more important issues. Just a thought

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Rep. Flynn has asked us to seek comments/thoughts on this potential bill. Please respond to these specific questions:

1. Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp? I don't think this is a good idea. It would likely result in a significant reduction in funding for Block Management. Given the choice of opting out, especially at a cost of \$25, many people would likely opt out. It would be very difficult to enforce the requirement for having a stamp on BMAs that do not require a sign in.

I suspect that Rep. Flynn is looking for a way for those hunters who do not use BMAs to avoid paying for them, but in reality, everyone benefits from the BMA program because it helps spread out hunting pressure.

2. Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest? \$25 is too high. Given the choice, many would opt out, even if they do hunt BMAs, as enforcement would be difficult. As it stands now, all hunters pay their hunting access fee. Its fair and effective and doesn't need to be changed.

3. What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age? There should not be any discounts for any licenses. The lost revenue to FWP is critically needed.

4. Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? If not, where would you like to see it go? A legislatively created interim committee spent almost 2 years developing a proposal for FWP licenses. That proposal, not piece-meal bills like this one, should be adopted by the legislature.

It is a very good thing when a legislator asks our opinion prior to the bill draft being finalized. This is an important topic and your replies are important! Please feel free to share this with others. I agree it's a good thing that Rep. Flynn asked for input and it should be given with respect, but it also needs to be clear that this is not a constructive solution.

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Rep. Flynn's proposed block mgmt. stamp. I believe the cost (\$25.00) is to high, \$5.00-\$7.00 would be more realistic. Also, i believe the monies generated should go directly to the Block Mgmt. program.

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My Two Cents.

Well here goes. First off I feel the the idea is a good one but still it's just another way to get into my pockets. I currently spend well over one hundred dollars every year for various permits and licences. When you add in fuel and all the misc. expenses for some of us it's get too expensive

real fast. If you look and the national average wages Montana is somewhere near the bottom. That simply means that we the people of this great state don't have that much cash floating around. Fine it's generally a good idea but, I like most Montana hunters hunt for the meat. And it's not cheap meat. It is a resource the belongs to the people of the State of Montana. Not the people in the State of Nebraska, or New York, or Florida, or Texas. Just Montana. So why not charge the nonresident more and the resident less. Lets say youth and senior \$5.00, all other residents \$15.00. and none resident \$30.00. All nonresidents that are involved in outfitted hunt or privately pay to access land to hunt pay \$300.00 for them to hunt BMA. Lets lookout for interests of the resident hunter and the nonresident who comes home to hunt or chooses to hunt on there own without the benefit of a licensed guide. These are the people that don't need more expense.

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I think this stamp sounds like a good idea. I would like to see the money go back to the block management program.

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I would oppose any BMA stamp. I view this as a way for folks to get out of paying for BMA's, but still using them. I hunt all the time, I have 50 plus days in the field this year, and every year for big game, birds, etc. I have not been checked once for a licence this year. I have not been checked for 8 years. Who would enforce and check for the BMA stamp? Yep, the same people who are not checking me now. I could save \$25 bucks and still hunt all the BMA's I want. I oppose this idea completely.

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I don't see anything wrong with the concept, use you pay. 1/2 for kids and seniors as defined in the increase bill. I'd also like to see some sort of fee for wolf management, just a big drain on the F & G right now. If we only could get a fee at Gardner for watchers and photographers, that's a stretch I'm afraid!

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I support a stamp for block management.

I support \$25 or more.

I support paying more to landowners, comenserate with the wildlife values on their land.

I support the Habitat Montana program. All hunters should pay a fee with their license for habitat and access.

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Yes I would support a BM stamp. \$25 for the fee is okay with me, but might be a little high for some folks. The cost for youth could be \$10 -\$12. It would be good if the funds could be directed toward 1. hunter access and 2. possibly habitat improvement. I feel the more limiting factor facing the hunting public today is Access, so I would prefer to see \$ spent on acquiring more access either by purchasing property or leasing from private landowners. With the proliferation of Outfitting over the last decade and the subsequent leasing or fee hunting on large tracts of private ranchland,

it's increasingly difficult to find any private property open for hunting, so anything that can be done to open some of these lands and/or compete with outfitting would be good. I realize the Rep. Flynn is an outfitter and the legislature may not be very friendly to this, but it's always good to have a discussion. I commend Rep Flynn for asking for ideas.

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#1: NO

Since I would not support it, Questions 2, 3 and 4 do not apply.

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I don't see a BM stamp doing anything but reducing the number of Montana citizens using Block Management and creating a serious enforcement problem. Who is going to check all these people on BM acres for users for stamps?

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I have been a regular out-of-state hunter (primarily for upland game birds) for 10-12 years and would support a \$25 Block Management Lands stamp if the monies went toward obtaining agreements on lands with quality habitat. Many "Block Lands" I've observed and hunted were in very poor condition (usually due to heavy cattle use) and, frankly, not worth hunting. In addition, a suitable formula should be considered to distribute use of funds based on the hunters' license -- big game/combo vs upland game birds only.

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Overall, I would favor some sort of user fee for use of block areas.

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My responses to the stated questions

1. Would you support the creation of a Block Management Stamp? *Yes, if it is applied to everyone who purchases a Montana hunting license because I believe the program benefits all hunters, present and future.*
2. Is \$25 an acceptable amount? If not, what would you suggest? *I don't object to \$25 but could be \$15 or \$20 if applied to all licensees.*
3. What, if any, cost should there be for youths 12-17 years of age? *I don't think it is a bad idea to have a small charge for the younger hunters to help instill the idea that someone is going to have to pay for access and habitat. I'd say \$5 would be a good place to start or \$0 if they could demonstrate that they've done something to help develop or protect wildlife habitat, that is participation in an established program or project on a WMA or NWR or private lands.*

or project on a WMA or NWR or private lands.

4. Do you support the funds raised going to the Habitat Enhancement Fund? If not, where would you like to see it go? *Right now I don't see much coming out of the Habitat Enhancement Fund and I am a believer in habitat enhancement work.*

*Doesn't seem like the program is being properly managed and the contracting rules that FWP has in place now are much of the problem from what I hear. I would rather see the monies used to further public access and in that regard I think we need to encourage FWP to institute some changes to the BMP, specifically implement an online registration program for those properties where the landowner is willing and develop and implement a process to pay more for properties which better wildlife habitat. This is a subject that deserves much more debate but I've found that FWP management doesn't want to even discuss the idea which is a shame since the majority of block management properties don't offer what I consider quality habitat for most species of big and upland game. I also wouldn't object to using such funds to purchase additional WMAs but I know that such a proposal is a long shot for this legislature to accept.*

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\$25 is a bit high. I like \$20.00